

# 200 Years is Not Enough: Revolutionary Cells in the Post-Fordist Era

For about two years now, since the demise of the anti-nuclear/anti-Wackersdorf movement and the May 1st actions in Kreuzberg (during which there were heavy riots), we have been pressed, like others groups, with the question of what the terms and developments are of leftist politics in West Germany and in West Berlin, and what our share is therein.

In response to the question of the causes of the present lack of any new perspectives, we have become a bit hesitant. When we compare the present discussions to those of the past 10-15 years, there is little difference to be seen. We are of the presumption that symptoms are often perceived as causes, whereby the issue of the incorporation of the Left into political-economic relationships disappears under the table, and thus leftist politics remain compulsively without engagement.

In any case, we see ourselves as presently confronted with a task whose dimensions initially spiralled above our heads. In the attempt, not only to develop a militant (cell) perspective, but to also explore uncultivated fields of theory, we were filled with such unnatural perspectives that we failed miserably. The same circumstances which dictate the crisis on the Left are also affecting those seeking a way out of the crisis. Also of importance is the break in any continuity to our discussion and the lack of any available structures wherein such a discussion can take place. Recently, the number of existing radical publications has declined, and so has the number of publications which are willing, and able, to print discussions of dubious legality given article 129a. The repression over the last few years against leftist publications seems to be taking its toll, and that is not due to individual editors, but rather is due to the fact that, with a few minor exceptions, there is no collective responsibility for the dissemination of radical publications.

The criminalization of militant ideas seems to have ceased being a concern to leftist minds; at the same time, the actual publication of militant writings has sharply declined. As a concrete example: handbooks for practical forms of resistance. In this area the situation has been particularly poor over the last few years. The fetishizing in and the equally dangerous uncarefulness of many handbooks (for example, on how to saw down power-lines) has resulted in much political and personal damage. Nevertheless, the need remains for a discussion of better methods of resistance, because practical resistance must not remain a myth or a secret science.

The campaign around the trial of Ingrid Strobl, for example, has, to a large extent, brought the notions of gene-technology, sex-tourism, and refugee-politics to the fore. As far all this is concerned, the forces of repression were dealt a blow in her case. But they achieved their end nonetheless: practical resistance has been at a virtual standstill since the house-searches of December 18, '87.



But how could things be otherwise? If a group were ever to seize the initiative to once more leave behind a bomb in the offices of Lufthansa, then they must rely on handbook instructions which are already years old, if they even manage to get their hands on such a handbook in the first place. In such handbooks, RZ recommends that we use industrial or military explosives. But who of us has available contacts with weapons-dealers, and who of us is able to break into military depots? There's always the old herbicide chemicals for use as explosives, perhaps? Well, we don't know whether anyone has noticed, but that stuff is hardly available anymore; at best, one can get it in some remote village, where people haven't yet been alerted to the fact that folks can make bombs out of the stuff, and where the shopkeeper won't look deep into your eyes and say, "Now, don't do anything stupid with this, okay?"

Except for Radikal, whose levels of distribution leave much to be desired, we can't think of any publication which can print such action tips and instructions without sowing the seeds of its own demise. And all of this apart from the question of whether there are even any groups left who are busy developing new techniques and technologies.

And now we have reached the second big problem, why do we see ourselves placed in the position of developing an illegal, militant resistance? It is no longer immediately obvious that such actions are recognized as something very relevant to oneself, and as something for which leftist politics as a whole will claim responsibility. Groups remain stuck in a given theme and work for a half a year on theory, only then to conclude that there are no practical possibilities for translating this into mass-militancy. They disband themselves, find each other once again in new or old groups, and then allow a new theme to fail because of the same old mistakes.

We have as an ideal the notion that a movement, via a collective decision-making process, could decide when and where the militant actions of small groups are useful and also provide the necessary structures to carry out such actions. This was still possible during the anti-nuclear movement in 1986. At a given moment, a common political ground could be found after clandestine actions were taken, even when no structures existed which could express this fact to the outside world, and when carrying out such actions, people relied upon the existence of capable support groups (would the BUKO, a coalition of action-groups in Nurenburg, rally in support?).

It is, of course, the question, whether a similar clandestine-process, which is currently necessary, is now possible given the State's repression. It is worth trying, in any case. Back in 1986, the communiques of responsible groups often lacked any mention of if and how various actions were to be carried out. Only when the actions were great successes (Adler) or horrible failures (Kuebel, an action during which feces were thrown into an expensive establishment) were the actions discussed, acclaimed, or criticized afterwards. But if the decision, to recognize militant actions as necessary and how to carry them out, is resigned to a purely individual one, then the conditions for developing massive resistance by various, small groups are not good. And what's more: when individualization is in question, the commitment to resistance becomes an individual's



own question, one which can only be answered 'yes' to by those people who can look back upon past experiences, discussions, and relations, and those people must then be able to bear the consequences of their actions by themselves.

In any case, in the last few years there have, at least, appeared some books and articles to which we could orient ourselves and work with, and these saved us lots of time and solved lots of formulation problems better than we could have done ourselves. Included in this group of publications: "The New History of Capitalism" by Joachim Hirsch and Rolan Roth, which should be found in every living-room; the "*Ganz von Unten*" contribution of Karl-Heinz Roth in Konkret 6/89 in relation to the Kuebel-discussion; the "From Riot to Revolution" piece (May 1, '89 document); the Freiburger piece "Out of Isolation, Into the Neighborhoods?!" in the latest Unzertrennlich; and finally a number of old RZ-texts, especially "In a Time of Danger and High Emergency, the Middle-Ground Brings Death".

Much of what we include here is not new. What's new is the connection, wherein we, coming from many different angles, offer various hypotheses, and the conclusions which we draw from these. On the one hand, for example, we think, for example, in contrast to the *Radikale Linke*, that it's not sufficient to work on theories of capitalist modernization for the time being. But on the other hand, in contrast to the autonomes, we think that the present structures of basically open forms of militant resistance are not strong enough to offer any decisive form of resistance to the process of restructuring. We also don't believe that the attempt to build up better structures from the inside will lead to anything more than turning about in circles and wasting away. One cannot improve on structures which can't be developed further.

We don't figure in with the traditional side of RZ. If we make clear in this article the possibilities for illegal resistance, we won't be merely clothing our old, worn-out approaches with new arguments. Just as with other forms of resistance, so it is too with illegal and armed forms of struggle, namely that situations change and that once-adopted decisions cannot be binding for all times.

As far as this is concerned, this piece is also meant to add to the discussion around the *Radikale Linke*, and even if we can't be present in person at the meetings and congresses, we hope nonetheless that our ideas will be present in people's minds.

The project *Radikal Linke* is, as we all know, not the result of our own strengths, but rather the result that the failure of the united leftist offences in the past years. In any case it can't claim to offer any mass-perspective. That applies also to the RZ and the autonomes, even though the autonomes falsely claim that they are the only ones who can still successfully mobilize and that they also offer a political perspective. But even a project born out of a situation of weakness is a step in the right direction, because usually in times of crisis the Left has been characterized by its sectarian squabbling and the struggle of everyone against each other.

(Therefore, the name *Radikale Linke* is necessarily arbitrary. You could first ask yourself,



how a group, whose initial planning meetings were secret and elitist, can claim to speak for a unified, radical left. And secondly, the term 'radical left' seems to imply that there exists a leftist tendency which does not aim at the roots of social ills. In a time of confusion of terms, it is difficult, but necessary, to retain a sense of certainty. Along with that, however, we mustn't let the countless Greens and SPD-ers on the subjective left fail to be made to realize that they are anything other than mere liberals.)

Still, we have our doubts whether anything practical will come of this project. Of course it is important, after years of unbroken discussion related solely to practical actions, to once again concern ourselves with various theoretical positions. But still there's that fear that the project will sell-out the question of practical militancy, leaving it only to those who can and want to leave it to other segments of the Left.

Rainer Trompert and Thomas Ebermann write in their "Design for Certain Political Fundamentals in *Radikale Linke*": "We would like to insert into daily politics a number of common views, and also to mobilize around relevant events, because we realize that theoretical ideas without interventionist practice remain void." In short, the theoretical discussion is not to be used to develop its own praxis, but rather the theoretical positions are to be fitted to an existing praxis. It is to be feared, however, that this will mean an intervention into other groups and movements. We propose that with a project such as *Radikale Linke*, that the involved groups reach as much of a position of consensus as possible, so that in moments of crisis, such as when shots were fired on *Startbahn West*, groups can remain politically united, instead of some groups having to remove themselves. The article in *Arbeiterkampf* from last October shows a different tendency however, namely that the project will become a game for those who love to argue *ad nauseam* about theory to the point of losing any practical relevance.

It is now important, not only to discuss the political advances of the past few years, but also personal contributions to the resistance. The already existing schism between theoreticians and people of the deed, and the hierarchical tendencies associated with such a schism, has become worsened over the past few years. Opposed to one another stand theoretical radicalism without any militant praxis, and militant praxis seemingly devoid of any theory. "It seems to be the case that the critique of weapons and the critiquing weapons themselves exclude one another, at least if you look at the actors/actresses involved" (Ingrid Strobl). The unaccounted-for militancy in Kreuzberg on May 1, and the nice eloquence without any political influence of the eco-socialists and the *fundis* in the Greens, seems to indicate that the schism is wider than ever. The explanation of this is not to be found in quest for influence versus a militancy-fetish, even if both are met with frequently. Differences in socialization and variously developed fears lead to different positions, even on the Left: "Talking, explaining, and lecturing are clever things which the members of the 'new middle-class' have, in general, learned. At the same time, however, they are things which are necessary when working in political groups. Another acquired trait is that of 'restraining one's



temper'. That means developing thought- and behavior-patterns which orientate the personal contributions, not towards the short-term, but rather towards the long-term goals." (RZ-Aug. '83). This is, in fact, not so much concerned with individual responsibility: "The contradictory situations which men and wimmin face when struggling against the established order are numerous indeed. As for reconciling the pen and the sword, they can only expect this of themselves" (Ingrid Strobl). This does not mean getting Thomas Ebermann in a ski-mask, or getting the autonomes into library reading rooms. Rather, this is about making both sides of this existng schism aware of the schism's existence, even if it can't yet be reconciled, and to thereby recognize the limits of their respective endeavors, whether they be theoretical or practical.

(Perhaps we've been grumbling too much, since the Left is always more self-critical and because we often leave 'positive thinking' to the esoterics. Nevertheless, the project *Radikal Linke* is one of the most important initiatives of the moment, too important, in fact, for the Left to ignore it.)

This matter is of concern to us. We must eliminate this 'division of labor' schism as much as possible and to give it practical form, and to bring all of this in line with our opinions and experiences.

## POST-FORDISM

In this next section, we shall discuss the political-economic developments of the last few years. We'll confine ourselves to a short summary; we couldn't say it any better than Hirsch/Roth. Whether we are even dealing with "post-Fordism" (Hirsch/Roth) or rather with an "intensified Fordism" (Karl Heinz Roth) is something we'll leave to the part-time economists. Above all, we are concerned with the question, What effect will these changing political and economic relationships have on leftist politics?

According to Hirsch and Roth, the crisis which caused a decline in capitalist profits at the end of the '70's had two causes. On the one side, the 'Taylorist labor process' reached its productive limits, and its inflexible and out-dated technological components made a swift conversion impossible. Other attempts to restore profits through rationalization, such as massive lay-offs, failed. And on the other side, the productine-line created a new type of worker, who, through individual forms of resistance, fought against monotony and alienation. Calling in sick, effecting sabotage, acting nonchalant, and possessing a generally low morale all damaged the production process, which is 'supposed' to run smoothly. The fought-for system of social welfare meant that wages were relatively high and could not be suddenly reduced given existing contract agreements. In this way, Fordism ran itself into the ground.

One important stabilizing characteristic of Fordism, namely the intimate intertwining of the State and its industires, seemed, at the time, to be inflexible. At the same time, the increasing inter-connectedness of the world economy limited the effectiveness of national initiatives to halt the crisis. What the world economy even further destabilized was and is the competetition between



industrialized nations, as markets became flooded with products (from ships to chips) from the quickly industrializing nations, and along with this is the much-discussed debt-crisis.

Even the ideological problems surrounding mass-consumption were intensified. The automobile, the gem of Fordism, the symbol of mass-well-being, suddenly became the cause of congested streets, millions of accident victims, and perishing forests. A new environmental-consciousness and the potent movement which grew out of this commanded the State to recognize these problems (ie, the scaling-back of the nuclear-energy program, the failure of Kalkar). No longer was consumption gratuitous; consumer organizations began distributing information on almost all available products, on everything from washing detergents to hazardous materials in food.

On different fronts, however, there were ways to head off the crisis:

Technological: Micro-electronics and bio- and gene-technology are not only part of the expanding sector of post-Fordism, but they also offer possibilities for social control and labor regulation. (We needn't say any more about this, as there are whole books full of such information; we recommend people read Thomas Muenster's "Revolutionary Virus" in Radikal, 135). In this category one could also name eco-technology.

The Increasing Flexibility in the Labor Market and the High Unemployment Among Women: The struggle of the '60's and '70's was more difficult to suppress than is now the case. A high level of unemployment is, thus, not only the result of computerization, but also a conscious goal.

But present labor-relations are being turned upside down wherever possible through promises and deals, and the labor process is being made more flexible. Whereas temporary-labor forces, during Fordism, were an expression of a refusal to be tied to a fixed career, under post-Fordism they are seen as an ideal: no social security, unqualified workers (lower wages, therefore), and flexible, but nonetheless dependent, workers.

At the same time, the social welfare system in West Germany has been dismantled more fully in comparison with other nations: reductions in unemployment benefits and child-care, lower student grants, and a reorganization of the health system have been but a few of the consequences. It is no longer possible to refuse all forms of work and to still be able to exist on unemployment benefits. That means that a partially voluntary, unintegrated sector of the population is being forced into wage-labor and thus into the system.

Even the role of the unions has changed: under Fordism they were still seen as social partners (which didn't mean that individual employers necessarily liked them), whereas now their power is being severely limited. At the moment when the unions, through their years of loyal cooperation with the State, nonetheless see through the attacks being directed against them, and recognize at the same time how little in struggle with the State they really are, because they have willingly tamed themselves all along, then their future role becomes, from the outside,



fundamentally different. The external forms have remained unchanged (for example, the right to strike), but their practical opportunities are now severely limited. And supposing the unions, under pressure from the restructuring, were ever to radicalize society, then they would find the repression measures already in place. The political radicalization of the DKB [German AFL-CIO] is hardly to be expected, even more unlikely would be their advocating the use of illegal action-methods. And ordinary financial questions (such as compensating for pay during a lock-out) make this situation even more dire.

The longed-for stratified society, one in which individual rolls and positions are clearly spelled out, won't be static. Rather, it will be a society in which everyone can, at any moment, be thrust either up or down the social ladder, creating an all-pervasive sense of *angst*.

Ideological: "In opposition to the mass of poorly paid, flexible, and uncertain laborers stand a small number of privileged employees and self-sufficient people. In contrast to years past, the number of 'typical' workers with steady jobs and steady incomes is declining. Along with this has come two separate consumption-patterns." (Unzertrennlich, 11/12)

Discount-stores and warehouses on the one hand, boutiques and luxury departments stores for the yuppies on the other. But this means more than just a collection of expensive stores and cafe's. A specific yuppie-culture has come into being, a culture which possesses a definite hegemony and one which performs a leading role in society. The discovery of the yuppie-word *zeitgeist* actually means that **their** culture is the *zeitgeist* and has, since 1968, taken over the dominant cultural avant-garde from the Left. It is important, however, to distinguish between the various instances of yuppie-culture and its actual social context. The problem isn't so much that this culture has taken over from both the traditional German 'flower-curtain culture' as well as from the counter-culture. Even less of a problem is the development of a culinary culture apart from wiener schintzels and spaghetti and tomato sauce. The problem is, that this culture of the few is based on the exploitation of others and the disturbing of social structures, and that its psychological success lies in its sublimation of personal and political defeats through conscious competition. This illustrates how fatal it is to confuse the struggle for culture (both in terms of art and manner of living) with the struggle for survival. The examples of leftist culture of the past few years have changed very little. Their immanent problems (collectives, relationships) have not been solved or collectively examined, and no new cultural forms have arisen in their place. This also explains why leftist politics has lost its appeal. The trend (nay, compulsion) towards leftist uniformity stands in contrast to the individual adoption of yuppie-style and at the same time its ideology.

Yuppie-ideology means the same-old false-gods of money, career, and power dressed in new wrappings. The old version (the cold, boring bureaucrat, married with children, inflexible and conservative) is no longer adequate to attract post-Fordist kids into the ruling class. Creativity, seeming autonomy, eloquent criticism, and the take-over of cultural freedom since '68 has made it



possible for yuppie-ideology to deeply force its way into leftist circles.

At the same time, these abilities are necessary to be able to function under post-Fordism. It is just this ability to make eloquent criticisms which has made it possible for profit-making concerns to have forced themselves into the environmental debate, and it is necessary, both internally and externally, to be able to correct mistakes made in the competitive market. Creativity helps one to discover new markets and to develop new technologies. Autonomy is the expression of individualization and competition; cultural freedoms compensate for the oppression of the workplace. These leftist characteristics have remained, namely critique, autonomy, and creativity. What have vanished, however, are solidarity, clarity, and attack. One can only guess what will result from this. The attempt to compensate for past societal failures through the search for individual happiness is at best ambiguous. At the same time, we are losing the very instruments needed to clear up uncertainties - and then, of course, esoteric concerns make their appearance.

When examining this alongside leftist tradition, one can see the results. While the members of the 'old' ruling class have retreated to their suburban villas, the members of the 'new' ruling class are heading for neighborhoods such as Kreuzberg and Schoenberg, neighborhoods where they are transforming into live-work-recreation-consumption areas. How this all looks is well known. Houses become more expensive, expensive shops and cafe's appear, redeveloping occurs to bring in newer, more expensive houses, and all of this results in the removal of the original shops and residents. Poverty is needed as a picturesque facade ('dining in the Bronx of Hamburg') to make one's own advances visible and to make it possible to flirt with living in 'dangerous neighborhoods'. Eventually this becomes tiresome, and the push for redevelopment and gentrification increases. Out of these motley areas a city neighborhood is soon constructed, a neighborhood wherein the poor can't possibly exist and wherein all the structures of resistance have been removed.

In this way, cities are restructured and stratified. In West Germany this has taken place along a north-south line, with the high-tech centers in Baden-Wuerttemberg and around Munich, the banking center Frankfurt, and finally smaller centers, including the heavily subsidized West Berlin. Along with these are the traditional well-off areas (Hamburg, Bremen, Kiel, with their ship industries) and the west (the Ruhrgebeid, with its steel and coal industries). But even within these cities the polarization is being intensified between the inner-city, the renovated neighborhoods and the suburbs, and the newly-constructed apartment complexes and old neighborhood, in the latter at least some structural appreciation is possible, just as in all old neighborhoods.

Yuppification is, therefore, not merely a material problem for the Left, but also an ideological one. Precisely because the boundaries are fluid, autonomes find themselves using computers, citizens initiatives become dubious, often unknowingly, because of their calls for restraint, and people in the Alternative List, with their 'realist' politics, redraw the boundaries between the die-hard yuppies on the one hand, and they, the leftists, on the other.



As a fourth point, we would like to mention the return of the socialist countries into the capitalist market. At the moment, this is a dynamic process, full of surprises. For that reason, we won't offer any definite prognosis. Anything is possible. Alongside the re-capitalization of Poland and Hungary and will maybe even be East Germany, the Soviet Union, and perhaps also Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and, finally, Romania, and then the secession of the Soviet republics.

West Germany itself, either reunited with the East or with East Germany as its colony, will be in a position to spread its political and economic hegemony throughout large sections of south-central and eastern Europe, aided, no doubt, by the process of European unity. Eastern Europe is, of course, an area ripe for investors who are seeking relief from flooded markets in the cities and the failed development schemes in the Third World. And since the opening of the borders, West Berlin is in danger of no longer being able to be a haven for victims of Germany's social system. The sub-culture here, like nowhere else, could quickly be destroyed by increased investments and the restructuring into an economic metropolis. All combined, this could be a process with dire consequences for the Left in West Germany, replacing what once was a system of long-during change with cataclysmic dynamism.

Even if the existing socialist states of the past few years had ceased being focal points for Western leftist movements, they were, nonetheless, the supporters of liberation movements in the Third World, and, merely through their existence, they also dampened the belief in the omnipotence of Capitalism. In a phase of a lack of political perspective and of reformist illusions, the sell-out of the socialist states has heightened the crisis on the Left. Worse still than the economic encroachments of capitalism into what was once socialist territory is that these encroachments have carried with them a very definite political ideology. Together with the dashed hopes of the liberation movements of the Third World (failed military insurrections in El Salvador and Chile; regression into dictatorship, Stalinism, and genocide in Cambodia, Iran, and China; the politically failed revolution in Portugal) has come a general loss of hope in finding a Utopia on the Left, meaning a return of politics to mere day-to-day concerns. This is a situation in which our position is definitely that of a minority, and this can't be covered over either with the projected hopes of the proletarian masses or with the peace/environmentalist movement's idea that "we number in the millions and are growing stronger every day" or with the projected hope of foreign liberation struggles. That means realizing that we are a minority, a minority that is itself affected by society's structures, and a liberation struggle must be waged both within this system, and from without.

Where political expectations seem unfounded, and when we realize how little we have actually, as yet, achieved, while at the same time the economic situation worsens and the compulsion to labor is intensified, then the function of the Left given Germany's reality seem outdated. Indeed, they force the Left into a situation of sectarian squabble. It's no wonder then that former leftists, given these realizations, have accepted posts of leadership.



A new political and economic elite is formed, and these will always be a thorn in the side of the Left. The confrontation with them, therefore, must become one of the primary focusses of leftist politics in the coming years. This should allow us to clear things up, though we must, at the same time, not force ourselves into isolation (Kreuzberg, May 1), but rather to use our enegies against the common enemy.

### APOCALYPSE - NO LONGER?

Why was the Left so taken aback by the political processes in the socialist states? The taken-for-granted Stalinism in the East Bloc, and the disappearing of that system there as an eye-opening perspective for changes here, could offer some explanation. Even the best of prophets could not have predicted the coming into being of such a political dynamic, which arose out of relationships which were barely able to even withstand the existing repression.

Another possible explanation lies in the 'perspectives' of the Left in the '80's. "The expected battlefield is the Middle East, but it could just as easily be West Germany or Eastern Europe, seeing how long a war has already been contemplated against the Soviet Union; after the Pershings and the cruise missiles, after numerous internal regulations have been put into place, etc., the plan-making still goes on here" (communique after an attack on the Green Beret training ground in Bad Toelz, May '86, Radikal 132/1). Everyone in the peace movement, from the civilians right up to the autonomes and the RAF, expected the same thing: the big war, the Apocalypse. And there was much evidence to support this fear: the stockpiles of arms, the verbal militarism of certainly the USA government, the military interventions in Granada, Lebanon, Iran, Libya, and also the Iran-Iraq war. Today, only three and a half years after the above cited communique, and only 6 years after the stationing of the missiles, everything seems totally different: just about all conflicts are excalated by the Super Powers themselves (Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua), liberation organizations are entering into negotiations or are being stalled (El Salvador, South Africa), the Iran-Iraq war is over, and the Perhsings and the cruise missiles are being dismantled. The 'hawks' are signing accords. The Left is standing, gaping in amazement, and tiresomely repeating its claims of '83, although leftists themselves no longer believe these fears.

Even the Left has interpreted this detente as an independent goal, the action of a single war-loving machines or its rulers, and not as means toward some other goal. (That which is not being struggled against is the fact that this system, dependent on oppression and exploitation, is one which operates on the basis of irrationality and even provokes wars which do more harm than good objectively). Included among the very few articles which explain the arms race of the '80's as arising from the dynamic of crisis and war is the article "In a Time of Danger and High Emergency, the Middle-Road Brings Death", published by the Revolutionary Cells in '83 (No, it wasn't us): "The much-bemoaned escalation of the East-West conflict has been incorrectly analysed as a break from and counter-point to the preceding period of detente; but if we look closer, we can see its actual consequences and means. The goal of the established imerialist



powers is, in the first place, the shameless penetration into the East Bloc for the purpose of paying for the costs of restructuring here at home, not, as is commonly supposed, the military destruction of the East."

This politics has largely achieved its goals at present: the capitalist penetration into and the ideological demise of the East Bloc are well underway. It is possible to explain the present period of detente as one which will last as long as the East Bloc and the Third World allow themselves to be submissive and/or the capitalist growth continues.

The Left, which has been preoccupied with opposing the arms race, weapons systems, and military operations, rather than the capitalist system itself which is responsible for war, is now left without an answer to or explanation for these 'peaceful' developments.

And the flip-side of the arms race, namely the economic effects of overcoming an economic crisis, is hardly considered. "The position of arms manufacturers within industrialized societies (such as West Germany) will only become more strengthened and legitimized by the decrease in international tensions, which were but the results of an economic crisis. The US is playing a great role in this: the so-called 'right-wing-Keynesian' concept of a gigantic enlargement of the national debt through enormous amounts of defense spending was a corner-stone of Reagan's economic policy. At the cost of a high national debt, along with a rising dollar and a drastic trade imbalance, this policy stabilized the American economy at the beginning of the '80's, while at the same time the world economy became destabilized. But the American defense industry has recently set its eyes upon a new goal, namely large subsidies for high-tech industries, which would strengthen American competitiveness in this market and regain advantages lost to other producers. But a high price must be paid for this type of industrial-politics. For a potential spin-off from the weapons industry, much larger financial means must be employed than for comparable developments in the civilian-technological industries. And the total economic side-effects are drastic indeed...When seen in its totality, the question remains whether the intensification of the defense industry and of weapons production in general - even given capitalist relations - are the best means of stimulating advances in technology. The technological progress in Japan, in light of the dramatic declines in the US, seems to indicate the answer is negative." (Hirsch/Roth)

In any case, the weapons industry is a significant economic factor, one which will, despite an intense process of disarmament, remain at a very high level, even when cuts in defense spending become immanent (ie, cuts in the SDI budget to help relieve the debt). And on the other side, pressure from the peace and anti-war movements, coupled with a decline in fears about military conflicts, will lead to pressures for reducing military research. Thus this must be another cause for the anti-modernizing Left.

Even within the environmental and anti-nuclear movements, this Apocalypse-fear was prevalent (when we look back upon the anti-nuclear movement, we see an extraordinary phenomenon, namely that the radical segments of the movement defined themselves for a long time with this apocalyptic-fear in mind). While the citizen-oriented side of the movement



concentrated on the dangers of radioactivity, the radical wings felt that the possibility of constructing atomic weapons which could threaten the East was reason enough to oppose atomic energy. And up to this day, people within the radical movements are surprised by the fact that their arguments were largely accepted by the citizens'-groups. This realization caused these groups to abandon the feeling that 'we are all victims', but it did not force them to construct an analysis of the established system. They could, just like the citizens'-groups, explain the building of atomic weapons as simply the continuing plan of cold-war enemies, and not the result of an economic crisis.

The present lack on the Left of attaching any significance to ecological questions can probably be explained due to the fact that the feared prediction of a deforested, radioactively-poisoned, cement-filled world had not come true (at least, not yet), and that catastrophies have become a part of every-day life. Consequences of this in the field of health care are readily becoming apparent, slowly and in an individualized fashion, namely in the rise of incidences of cancer and allergies and other sicknesses. What's more, the environment is a cause which new, green-groups would like to reduce to a mere ecological problem, a problem which could be dealt with with their ecological-capitalism, though needing the support of a radical wing. It will indeed be interesting to see if the forward-looking capitalism of someone like Joscka Fischer (of the Green-Alternative List) can survive given the short-term demands of industry. Presumably, this will only succeed if the Fischer-types can 'present' some form of alternatives to the unavoidable decline in certain industrial tasks.

The Left, however, must not conclude that simply because capitalism gave rise to the environmental movement, that it must simply remain a typical theme for the middle-class. That's why, considering this is far from an exhausted issue, whether or not eco-capitalism can survive, and considering the developments in West Berlin seem to indicate that it can, the Left can't write this matter off altogether. Especially here in West Berlin, in the last few months there have been several issues which should allow us to question the red-green city government, namely the question of the electricity network, the Schering-affair (in connection with gene-technology and Third World groups), the border crossing at Schikauweg, a car-free inner-city, etc.

The fixation on the Apocalypse has prevented the Left from taking seriously the economic developments of the last few years; the Left kept its outlook firmly focussed on the end of the world, or at least focussed on the military aspects of the established system, while, in the mean time, the reality of people's normal, daily lives has been wholly rearranged. This fatal error, namely failing to develop one's politics from out of the perspective of daily life, but rather as a reaction to the military posture of the enemy, which normally results in a subjective view of the enemy, is still being committed.

With the exception of the Hafenstrasse and the May 1st celebrations in Kreuzberg, the party-conferences and manifestations of the neo-nazis have become the primary rallying-points for militant opposition. However, whenever anti-fascist groups long for an anti-capitalist resistance



against the housing crisis, rent, or two-tiered social systems, these desires remain as words and are not translated into actions. When fascist groups are only opposed militaristically, instead of exposing the bare reality of their politics, then it is very easy for those groups to present themselves as the 'victims'. Nazis and their potential sympathizers are, after all, human, and thus they must be dealt with in a different manner than a nuclear power plant. If militant anti-fascism only is militant IN APPEARANCE, then the citizen complaint of the anti-fascism movement proves true, namely that militant resistance only plays into the hands of the right-wing.

To give another example: here in Berlin, we still have not developed an effective structure to resist evictions at the hands of the red-green city council, even though many folks are already anxiously awaiting Bush's visit (or next year's May 1st). Here the point is also relevant, namely holding on to symbols which no longer speak to reality, because Bush is the head of an American State preoccupied, not with military, but rather with economic expansion. The question again: why this belief in an Apocalypse on the Left, why are always making out the enemy to be more invulnerable than he really is? This is worthy of an independent investigation, since we can't offer any sufficient answer.

We maintain that militant politics all-too-often yields a citizen's conception of resistance, albeit concealed in an anti-capitalist veneer. Usually only those matters are attacked wherein the State holds its own, self-defined ethical norms of freedom and humanity in contempt; daily, structural violence is not a sufficient legitimation for militant resistance. What's more, we get the feeling that the commonly-expressed *angst* of the Apocalypse is, actually, a secret-longing for its arrival. When power structures have become so firmly entrenched, then the individual sufferings need to be explained as collective experiences.

### THE LEFT AS AN (EX)CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

When we look past the facade of the ever-recurring slogans of leftist pamphlets and demonstrations, then we must often conclude that rarely have we had such trouble times internally as at present. The individualization of not only the decision of whether or not to enter into resistance but also of simply daily affairs has increased dramatically. Our longing for happiness is privatized, and resistance is merely a means of securing the material advantages which can guarantee this. This helps us to explain why so many groups come and go. This reason is that the expectations and needs in these groups are at odds with past experience. Many of these groups are in danger of simply becoming liberators of the desires of others. If they can't do this, then they are curiously abandoned in favor of trying to realize a collective gratification of one's own expectations given the established social conditions. Remaining within the leftist scene really comes out of the realization that remaining gives more satisfaction. The Left as a categorical imperative? Of course, we could naturally, from this contention, exclusively rely on our own experiences, but even this is a sign of regression. The notion that 'everyone is the maker of his/her own happiness' has even been accepted within leftist circles; except for the most important exception, namely that



patriarchal structures and behaviour patterns must be openly discussed with an eye to changing them, individual conflicts are no longer placed in a wider context.

Also on this topic a longer discussion paper needs to be written. We ourselves have always had difficulties with this, namely to express in words this great emptiness of broken collectivity. At the same time, the question of the situation within leftist groups (individual and political) is of vital importance in the search for a militant, illegal perspective, during a time when things are going badly on the Left. To put this another way: is our initiative not just an altered version of exactly the same militant subjectivism which we earlier criticized in the autonome-groups? The eternal revolt of the here-and-now instead of being persuaded by an analysis of the objective power-structures?

Firstly, this is certain: "only in struggle does the moment of unanimity exist" (see "Kamalatta"). (The reverse of this, namely that unanimity is necessarily the result of struggle, has been proven false on many occasions). What this means is that it is bullshit to try and work out all internal difficulties and problems before entering into the struggle.

Secondly, the relationship between theory and praxis is not a linear one, but a dialectical one. That means: resistance comes into being, not when the entire leftist movement arrives at a common strategy which then only needs to be carried out in practice, nor when a unique, historical opportunity is provided, out of which resistance springs up automatically. We can't sit around and wait for the moment that the entire leftist movement comes together and begins working on an anti-modernist political agenda. For one thing, we lack the necessary structures that would allow such a discussion process to take place in the first place. What we can do is to stimulate discussion through actions. Now we arrive at the question whether actions are productive or counter-productive. For example, the Kuebel-action: this action could never have been the initiative of the autonome scene alone (the consensus was never large enough, nor was the level of militancy high enough, to force the 'Maxwell' to close), but because of the fact that the place had to be closed down, the action unleashed a great deal of discussion.

Thirdly, the militant-left, which actually brings about no militant praxis, is not militant. Militant action has always derived its legitimacy, not only from the fact that the State and Capital won't disband of their own accord, nor will they be persuaded with nice words, but rather militance is also needed in the form of self-liberation, as a breakthrough into internalized power-structures. "He who breaks no laws is broken by the laws." That's why it's important that we develop a politics that makes can make use of relevant militant actions even in times of political calm. If we don't do this, then this need - which is a common need on the Left - either will be gratified by politically counter-productive points or will aggressively seek an outlet within leftist circles themselves.

Our fourth point is that whenever the analysis is correct, such as the fact that post-Fordism is expanding the process of individualization, it will become even more difficult to form a mass-militant movement.

In the production sector, the classical model of the factory is either disappearing altogether



or being redefined by the housewife, rationalization, increased control possibilities, and the continual replacement of personnel. Logistical advantages (including space) for organising resistance, such as in the factory battles in Italy and France and during the few wild-cat strikes here in Germany, are disappearing. What's more, everyone is becoming increasingly dependent on their jobs, and the consequences for speaking out, such as risking one's place in the labor market, are becoming more severe. Even in the reproductive sector its becoming harder to organize resistance. The reorganizing of neighborhoods is destroying space-structures outright. What's more, freedom in the reproductive sphere, which sometimes is the only way of getting resistance started, is being reduced by the coercion to labor.

Whenever the organizational conditions of organizing resistance become changed, it's not possible to stick with old concepts. If flexibilized workers have a way of life which already makes resistance impossible, then they are obviously in no position to organize themselves to counter-act this plan.

When the social reorganization of the neighborhoods is complete, it won't be possible to motivate yuppies around neighborhood issues and thus the resistance capability of that entire neighborhood is zero. The hot-beds of militant resistance, those few places where leftist politics is still seen as a power-factor, are, not surprisingly, those neighborhoods where this process of reorganization is in full swing, neighborhoods which the powers-that-be see as the inheritors of a political legacy from past movements, such as places which attempted to stop this social reorganization, like Berlin (Kreuzberg) and Hamburg for example. Even places like the Rhein-Main district (Frankfurt), which were once centers of the movement, are now dormant. And we won't even mention the high-tech metropolises in southern Germany. The article from Freiburg in Unzertrennlich gives a perfect analysis of this evolutionary process which transformed a small, revolutionary city into a center of high-tech industry. But on the question of organising resistance, they miss something: "The point which we can seize and use for organizing resistance is the uncertainty and sense of crisis which accompanies the present restructuring process." Firstly, what they call "crisis", namely cutting off parts of the social network, is not actually a crisis, but rather an integral part of the post-Fordist system. Secondly, it is wrong to count on a crisis to spawn a resistance, and finally the question of communism/anarchism is again reduced to the question of how to drag yourself out of economic misery. "Even in Freiburg, the situation will lead to break-points, contradictions, and resistance against contemporary politics." (Can the lowest of the social strata be kept quiet with a process of repression and an argument for resignation, for being content with what you already have?) "Therefore, we hereby separate ourselves from the idea of a revolution surfacing from out of a united Left and instead act upon our notorious expectations of an autonomous, fighting movement, spawned from its own social necessity, a movement alongside of which the Left can and must find its place."

This brings up the question of whether this destroys any 'hope' we might have. In other words, how can a mass-movement against post-Fordism come into being when the individual



people, who are part of the mass, have become so individualized, and when knowledge of the history of the Left, of the possibilities and chances for resistance, is destroyed, and when State repression is able to completely squash any few remnants of resistance?

The Left, therefore, cannot operate on the premise that such a politics of resistance will find itself in relevant surroundings. Contemporary, uncoordinated squatting actions in West-Berlin and in other German cities are going blindly in that direction, and a simultaneous process of economic as well as political marginalization is taking place. (Or are we again finding ourselves in the midst of a banal generation gap, wherein the experience and knowledge of one generation is not adequately passed on to the next?)

Our fifth point is that post-Fordism is still in its social-consolidation phase, in other words, the ideological, economic, and repressive measures of today are creating much heavier disturbances than the accustomed minor disturbances of years past (there's little point in speculating about the past, but it's still intriguing to wonder how Fordism would have progressed had a massive resistance been in place when the first Ford production line came into being).

Obviously, post-Fordism cannot act as a permanent solution for the ills of capitalism. To name but a few examples: because the East Bloc will be made economically dependant, imperialism will necessarily reach its limits; the expanding sectors of high-tech and gene-technology will become saturated; the contradictions of falling wages and welfare benefits and the need for a rise in purchasing power will only be temporarily resolved.

But a stabilized form of post-Fordism will, either through freezes or through an institutionalized ability to create conflicts, be in a position to sort out these contradictions. That's why the Left can't afford to place all its hope in a resistance coming into being in the long-term and why it can't afford to sit around and wait until its theoretical cadre, who will have already fallen years behind reality, are in a position to fully interpret the whole process.

### AN APPROACHING FASCISM AND A POST-FORDIST CONTRADICTION?

One contradiction which stands in the way of a calm, social-democratic approach to halting post-Fordism is the present resurgence of fascism. Within but a single year, the *Republikaner* have become a potent political party in West Germany; talk about reunification is finally being taken seriously; and the recent scenes around the Berlin Wall made one think of the past, because the people who were there tearing down the wall didn't think of themselves as members of any party, but solely as Germans.

The question of whether fascism is in contradiction with capitalist development is a favored one on the Left. We believe that the present developments in Capital are objectively necessary, even if these developments partially harm Capital itself. "The capitalist system of the 'free West' hasn't had to justify its production for the last 40 years. But now it needs a justification, and precisely because there isn't one, it has to channel all of its ideological and social-organizational energies to contain future conflicts, revolts, destructions, and battles. The only radical



fighting-ideology which is suited for imperialism is that of fascism, sexism, racism, and nationalism" (RZ). Thus, the present resurgence of fascism is necessary, because the lowest of the three social strata won't stay calm enough to solve things in a social-democratic or orange-green fashion. Despite this, the rise in fascism could be seen as an economic timebomb. It could be more expensive to wholly engulf East Germany, considering the subsidy-monies which would be required, than if East Germany were merely retained as a colony; and even channeled conflicts are better than no conflicts, and, above all, they give the chance to build up a reformed leftist power.

It's difficult to assess what level of struggle against fascists and fasisms can be waged without questioning the capitalist system itself. This lack of questioning will result, however, if the struggle is exclusively waged against those fascist groups which are already marginalized from society. At the moment, the struggle against fascist, sexist, racist, and nationalist ideology is of a greater importance, precisely because these ideas are in danger of becoming intertwined with the general notion of the common-good. That is why this struggle must be waged by putting the slogan "behind fascism lies capitalism" into practice.

### RZ: STILL DISPELLING MYTHS!!

At the end of this article, a German name is attached. Even if this name is not protected by law, it is still the mark of a leftist organization, an organization to which certain expectations are connected. We have carefully chosen this name: it stands for a politics which relates its militant, illegal actions to the state of the movement in general without being itself affected by the ups and downs of the movement, a politics which combines theory and action and which develops a continuity. Even though we were clear from the start that we did not count ourselves among the *guerilla diffuse* of autonome action groups, it took some time, nonetheless, before we decided upon this name.

That's not only because of the increased risk of legal investigation, but also because of all the myths surrounding "RZ". This myth-formation can be explained through the tendency of leftist people not to involve themselves in a form of struggle which entails personal risks. So why the myth-forming, which naturally excludes these people themselves? People in the resistance are made out to be *uebermenschen* and their methods are considered impossible to imitate.

Other Revolutionary Cells have been busy, but it seems that the questions surrounding the notion of armed struggle itself has become more important than the dissemination of the existing communiques.

But RZ is in danger of becoming just a myth if actions are merely carried out without concern for their political content. This seems to be the case, at least, in the campaign against *auslaender*- and refugee-politics. Apart from the physical damage inflicted upon the Berlin refugee office and the Cologne center for the registration of foreigners, these attacks seem to have had little political effect. When one Revolutionary Cell once again made the point in a recent attack (May 9, 1989) on the court houses in Muenster and Duesseldorf that the campaign ought to be taken up by



the entire autonome and social-revolutionary movement, it became sadly obvious that the movement as a whole was not going to react. And if you all maintain, "we have never fostered the illusion that segments of the proletarian youth, wimmin, unemployed, and other groups in society would immediately find common cause with refugees and immigrants, because racism and sexism are too deeply ingrained for that. Anti-imperialism must begin by breaking through in these areas", then that still does not answer the question, How?, and the campaign remains ineffective.

It would definitely be worth while to look into this more deeply. But at the moment we don't really want to write more about this, because the discussion of the attacks which took place is primarily the responsibility of those who worked on the attacks. We're not concerned with insinuating ourselves into some nice little leftist past-time; on the one hand we have people who continually carry out militant politics just to be reproached for not concerning themselves with theory, and then we have the rest of the people who are such an apathetic lot (who get a kick out of analyzing themselves from the outside while sitting in a bar). On the contrary, our goal is to stimulate discussion within Cell, that is, leftist circles, to avoid the problem of making internal contradictions known only after a campaign has finished (for more on this, see the "*Startbahn* Discussion Piece"). The Cells need to shed some of their surrounding mysticism and thereby add to the process of expanding the movement by making their internal political convictions more understandable.

But still, there is something positive in the myth. The high expectations surrounding an RZ-project, at least as far as theory, practical completion, and continuity are concerned, have enabled us to express our (revolutionary) impatience in the form of actions. So we have finally reached a time externally when we are now able to address the above points. This hasn't been the case with other projects; perhaps they just fell short. A continually open discussion could lead to both a high level of discussion as well as action, especially if other groups don't fall apart in a phase wherein groups leave their theoretical development wholly up to themselves.

We also became stuck on two other points when we decided to become part of RZ.

The first is, we still aren't clear as to what the exact relationship is between the various, individual Cells; in other words, how is a common politics formed? Of course, each Cell is autonomous and the name is not limited to just the 'core-cells'. Nonetheless, the seeming division, which the Justice Department aids in making, between 'core-cells' and 'resonance cells' is not without some basis. Because it is, of course, easier for the somewhat larger cell structures to formulate theoretical proposals and to carry these out in practice, whereas the smaller cells can just follow along these given lines.

We would like to see the groups from the old RZ take a critical look at their past (for example, why hasn't the RZ-concept become more widespread?) and propose some means of democratization, at least as far as is feasible given State repression.

The second point is, that we have some difficulties with some RZ actions from the past, especially with the involvement in the high-jacking to Entebbe. Of course, those days are now



past, when high-jackings were an instrument of the militant Left, so we needn't fear a repeat. Still one has to wonder why the only mention of this event in the book 200 Years RZ is a tribute to those RZ'ers who died in the action. As far as we know, no RZ text exists which takes a critical look at this action.

Even in the lowest of times, deeds must take place. This is part of our conceptual plan. Again: the situation on the Left is, at present, rather poor, even on the militant wing. What we are lacking is both a mass-movement as well as militance. Whenever a solution is sought for in a militant mass, the same vicious circle comes to light again: no actions are taken, because there aren't a mass of people willing to act, and there aren't a mass of people willing to act, because a lack of undertaken actions has resulted in a lack of practical perspectives. Here again we see post-Fordism at work through political integration (for example, the Green-Alternative List and the restating of leftists demands and politics in terms acceptable to the capitalists) and through the porcess of individualization (increased pressure to work, micro-electronics, centralized factories, pleasant jobs).

Regaining our ability to define ourselves politically (in other words, to force other social groups to redefine themselves according to the demands of the Left) and regaining the fighting spirit which we need to carry on won't come about either through theoretical discussions, nor with spontaneous moments of mass-militancy. Growing from out of a weak position is only possible with a mixture of provocative actions coupled with theoretical positions which expose the ideological reality of our enemy while not, at the same time, bringing us into discredit among those we hope to influence.

Here an historical example comes to mind: the climax of the '68-movement was not so much reached as a result of the theoretical discussions which took place after Rudi Dutschke was shot. Before all of this, for example, there was the poster-action, when illegal posters against the Vietnam War were spread all over West Berlin. Although such an action is really nothing special these days, at the time, it had the perfect political effect: within the SDS, a process of politicization resulted after the action, while not hindering principled agreement. The negative public opinion drew great media attention, resulting in an increase of membership in discussion groups which had previously been quite small. The same applies for the egg-attack on the America House. Our plan also goes a little ways in this direction, on another scale of course, and adapted to the some 20-year old history of militant struggle in West Berlin and Germany. That's why we intend to inflict serious economic damage upon the ideological protagonists of post-Fordism.

We expect the following:

1. We need to break through the obvious lack of criticism of micro-electronics and yuppie-culture which has so deeply pervaded the Left; we want the Left to come to recognize its own guilty conscience.
2. Given the decentralization which has taken place in many small companies, it should be fairly easy to completely shut down certain firms. Even branches of high-tech firms are somewhat



more flexible when it comes to relocation than are branches of other, more traditional industries. In the long term, we would like to add to the destabilization of the investment climate in West Berlin, where investments are currently on the rise.

3. We would like to partially reverse the trend on the Left of lacking perspective and a willingness to act.

Our own strengths in this process are, of course, limited; a cell can only realistically carry out a few actions per year. Nonetheless, we hope to have an effect. The political possibilities of illegal actions are often over-estimated by those carrying out actions and under-estimated by the opponents of action. We want to more closely examine this. Illegal actions can achieve a continuity, and thereby unleash a process which makes the enemy feel uneasy. What actions can't do, however, is replace political dynamics and discussions within the mass-movement. And they also mustn't lead to an independent culture. What they can do is go farther than the mass-movement and the Left as a whole can. If we are limited in Kiez, then we can go to Guenewald; if, despite years of discussion, too few people show up at a demonstration against genetic technology, then we can always pick up the slack; if squatters can't themselves take actions against developers because they are always under surveillance, then perhaps it is possible for us to act.

The problem remains, however, that the realization of this concept into a broad, politically effective method is still only feasible in leftist bastions such as Hamburg and Berlin, where illegal actions are not isolated events, but are rather widely discussed. The question remains whether this concept can be carried out in smaller cities, or in cities where post-Fordism is already more advanced, namely in Muenich or Stuttgart.

But it is clear that the present state of apathy, waiting for others to seize the initiative, or the taking of mini-actions is not acceptable. Maybe this attempt offers a solution, to confront the regional process of restructuring by coming together in the open in mass-militant protest, and letting this be coupled with illegal actions. But this isn't the place to decide that, rather, it must come out of a process of discussion. And this discussion is desperately needed.

This concept states exactly the drawback of limiting the revolution to Kiez (see the discussion piece, "From Riot to Revolution").

It's important to set up counter-powers in our own neighborhoods to hinder the eventual process of social restructuring. The problem is, will each small capitalist be willing to lose his/her job, especially if no counter-structures are in place? Where can we buy/steal things, for example, if stores like Kaiser's move out?

This point makes it clear that the development of poorer neighborhoods is not independent of the development of richer areas. An attack on Benny in Kiez doesn't harm the high-tech producers in Charlottenburg and Wilmarsdorf. Building a gymnasium in Kreuzberg does not affect the expensive establishments in Schoeneberg. What we see in So 36 are the symptoms, the cause



is the economic development, which is taking place primarily in city-centers. Yuppification and the increase in numbers of sport facilities are the results of two different concepts: 'revaluing' and 'renovation' respectively, of which only one can continue.

As for us, for each independent action we shall write a full discussion piece, in which all of the above will be considered, bearing in mind actual developments. Above all, we are counting on reactions to this article, whereby we already are aware of the folks in the above-described weak structures, who often out of being pressed for time offer no replies, and then only react when actions force them to voice their opinion.

We were forced to be vague in the last part of this article. What comes of this shall be revealed in our praxis. We are counting on a fruitful discussion, which will bring the possibility of another way of life that much closer to us all.

*REVOLUTIONARE ZELLEN*, November '89